

# Workforce News



A quarterly publication of the Department of  
Workforce Services: issued June 2009

**Central:** Juab, Millard, Piute, Sanpete, Sevier, Wayne

**jobs.utah.gov**



## The Graying of Utah's Farmers

Data just released from the  
2007 Census of Agriculture



### Inside:

- **Juab:** Construction jobs down
- **Millard:** Jobs down slightly
- **Piute:** Losses moderate
- **Sanpete:** Employment still up
- **Sevier:** Holding steady
- **Wayne:** Jobs hold on



Contact the  
author,  
your regional  
economist,  
with any  
questions on  
content:

Lecia Parks Langston  
435-688-3115  
lecialangston@utah.gov

Usually in this newsletter, you're reading about nonfarm jobs "this" and nonagricultural employment "that." If you belong to that cadre of individuals who raise our food supply, you may think that we arbitrarily ignore you, the service you provide, or think you are not an important part of the Utah economy.

Au contraire! We data geeks adore data of any kind and would love to regularly track agricultural employment. Unfortunately, our employment data is derived from administrative sources (the unemployment insurance program) that are limited by laws which typically exclude individual farmers. However, every five years, the U.S. government conducts an agricultural census that provides all sorts of farming information.

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# The Graying of Utah's Farmers (continued)

## More Diverse and Older

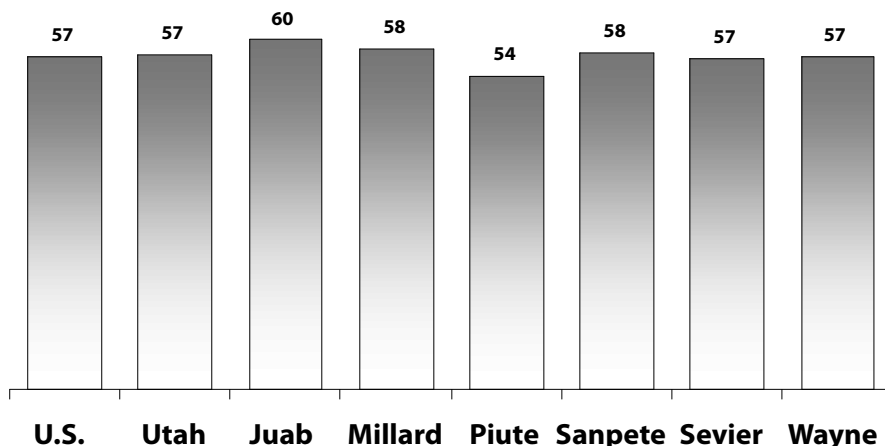
The recently released 2007 Agricultural Census shows that nationally, farm operators have become more diverse, with more women and ethnic minorities working U.S. farms. And, farm operators have gotten older. Even back in 1978, farming wasn't a young man's occupation—the average age of farm operators was just over 50. However, by 2007, the average farmer's age topped 57 years old. National data also show that the number of operators 70 and older grew by 20 percent between 2002 and 2007, while the number under 25 decreased by 30 percent.

The counties of central Utah fall right in line with national trends. Only Piute County showed a younger-than-average farmer age. Average ages for Juab, Millard, and Sanpete County all topped the U.S. and Utah figures.

## What Now for the Family Farm?

Economic barriers such as climbing operating costs, competition, tax hurdles, and market forces have made it difficult for young families to take over from graying farmers. More and more, family farms only provide supplemental income to wages earned elsewhere. Plus, many young people aren't interested in the hard work and uncertainty running a family farm entails. Finally, the cost of buying new land has sky-

## Average Age of Farm Operator 2007



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture; 2007 Census of Agriculture.

rocketed—many economists believe driven by the federal government's "unlimited" farm payment plan.

What might the aging of farm operators mean for agriculture? Most likely, farm assets will continue to be

consolidated into larger operations. From an economic point of view, that may be positive. Larger firms can often operate at a lower average cost. However, from a sentimental point of view, many may mourn the slow decline of the family farm. **WFN**

## Other interesting facts from the 2007 Census of Agriculture:

- In Juab County, 35 percent of farms sold less than \$1,000 worth of agricultural products.
- Millard County ranked first in the state for the number of bee colonies.
- The average farm production expenses in Piute County measured \$95,000.
- Sanpete County ranked first in the state for both inventories of turkeys and sheep/lambs.
- In Sevier County, the average farm netted under \$14,000 in income.
- Cattle outnumber people by more than 10 to one in Wayne County.

For more information see: [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov)

# County News

## Juab County

Overall job losses almost evaporated in Juab County by the end of 2008. By December, the county had worked through construction employment losses associated with completion of work for the first phase of the Currant Creek Power Plant. Just one month earlier, year-over job losses measured 11 percent. In December, the decline had shrunk to a mere 0.5 percent.

In fact, Juab County bucked the general trend and experienced an increase in both manufacturing and construction employment, while it did follow the general trend of growing government and private healthcare employment. However, Juab County isn't immune to recessionary pressures. Mining, wholesale trade, and leisure/hospitality services all exhibited notable employment declines.

## Millard County

Millard County can't seem to make up its mind between employment gains and employment losses. In the final quarter of 2008, employment gains won out—but just barely. Between December 2007 and December 2008, Millard County's nonfarm jobs increased by 0.5 percent (about 20 jobs). However, covered agricultural employment contributed an additional 40 new positions.

Most industries held their own—only construction and leisure/hospitality industries shed jobs. On the other hand, retail trade, transportation, professional/business services, and government generated net new jobs.

## Piute County

Employment levels in Piute County also vacillated between job growth and job loss. December ended the year with a year-over gain of just 1.4 percent. Here, too, manufacturing and construction as well as transportation displayed employment declines. However, gains in retail trade, wholesale trade, and government proved strong enough to push overall figures into the black.

## Sanpete County

As 2008 came to a close, so did Sanpete County's long spate of employment gains. Economic contraction drove employment down 3.1 percent in the final month of the year.

Most of the job decline was associated with the temporary closure of Moroni Feed. Nevertheless, construction, transportation, professional/business services, and other services all experienced employment declines. On the positive side, retail trade, private healthcare/social services, and government all generated notable job gains.

## Sevier County

Sevier County's long run of employment expansion also came to an abrupt end in the final quarter of 2008. Between December 2007 and December 2008, the county lost roughly 280 jobs for a year-over decline of 3.4 percent.

With the decline in overall employment, it's not surprising that the job-losing industries (construction, manufacturing, retail trade, transportation, leisure/hospitality services, and other services) out-numbered the job-gaining industries (mining and healthcare).

## Wayne County

Like many less-populated areas, Wayne County seems to be surviving the recession better than its more metropolitan counterparts. While expansion is down, Wayne County still showed a year-to-year employment gain of nearly 2 percent in December 2008. Wayne County's relative immunity doesn't extend to all industries, however. Construction and private educational services both showed notable losses. However, gains in leisure/hospitality services and government more than offset other industry's losses. **WPN**

For more information about these counties, go to:  
<http://jobs.utah.gov/jsp/wi/utalmis/gotoCounties.do>

# Got Unemployment Rates?

Yes, here at the Utah Department of Workforce Services, we've got unemployment rates. However, at the county level, we've got unemployment rate estimates. The U.S. unemployment rate is generated from a monthly survey of roughly 60,000 households. The state rate is largely the result of survey data. But, county unemployment rates are estimated using data from other sources. Why? No one really wants to fork out the cash needed to expand the survey sufficiently to generate unemployment rates at the county level.

This estimation procedure isn't a new phenomenon or the result of recent government cutbacks. It originated roughly 60 years ago and relies heavily on data from the unemployment insurance system—both for employed and unemployed estimates.

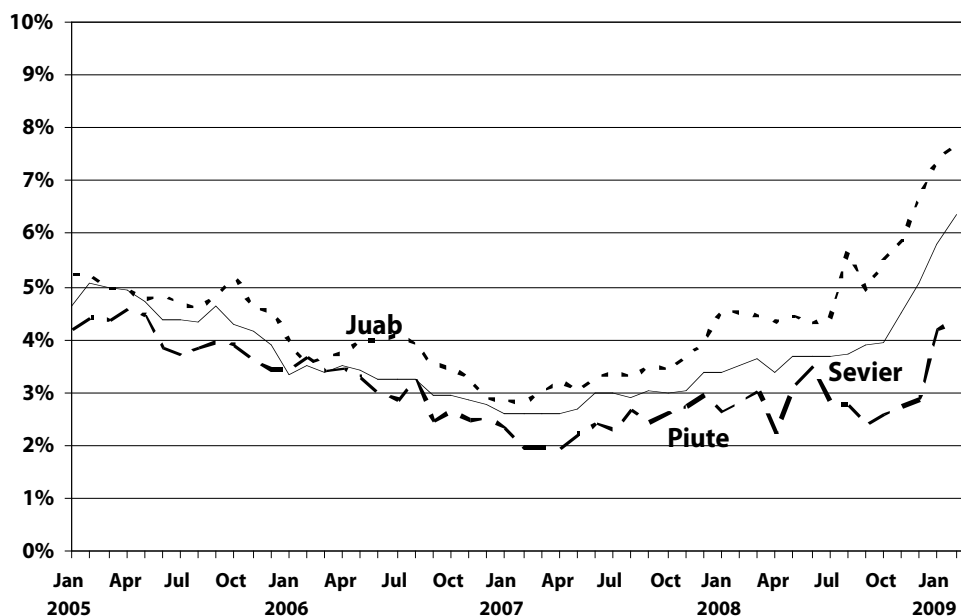
Now, don't be fooled into thinking these rates represent only workers receiving unemployment claims checks. They do not. The estimation process attempts to account for anyone who would be considered unemployed in the national survey. Of course, people "on unem-

ployment" are included. However, we also make estimates for other jobless populations—out-of-work individuals who didn't qualify for unemployment insurance benefits, people entering the labor market for the first time, workers returning to the labor force after an absence, etc.

Don't forget that one must be actively looking for work to be counted as unemployed. If you're retired, a stay-at-home mom, or an out-of-work student who isn't looking for a job, you are not counted in the labor force at all.

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## Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates

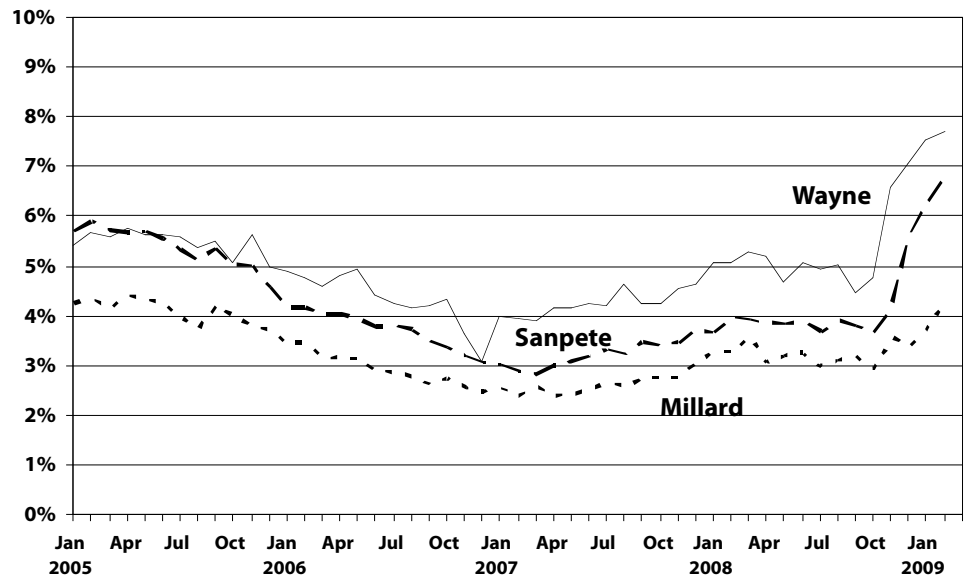


Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services.

The bottom line? These numbers are estimates and at times may not be an entirely accurate reflection of reality. However, they are calculated with a consistent methodology over time and for all counties across the United States.

Current unemployment rate estimates for counties in central Utah show increased joblessness across the board. After all, the U.S. is in recession. (Please note that most counties experienced record low unemployment rates during 2006 and 2007.) Juab and Wayne counties are currently showing the highest unemployment rates in the area. However, unemployment in these two counties still registers below the national average. Millard County has experienced the smallest increase in joblessness and its rate remains very low—just over 4 percent. **WEN**

## Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates



Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services.

For more information about how county unemployment rates are estimated, see: [www.bls.gov/lau/laumthd.htm](http://www.bls.gov/lau/laumthd.htm)

## What's Up?

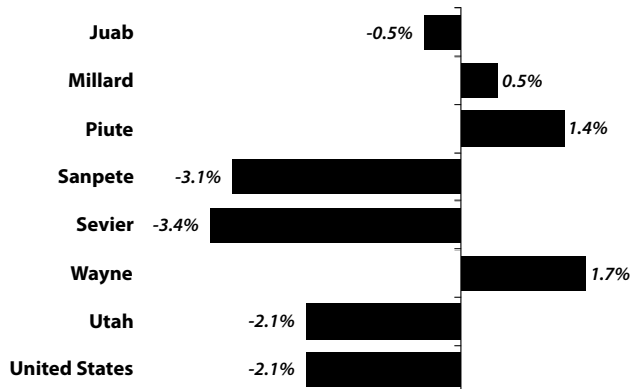
The **Richfield City Council** approved an agreement with the Federal Aviation Administration to accept \$750,000 in grant money. The FAA funding is in addition to \$1.4 million the city has already secured in federal money for expansion of the city's airport. Federal money is set to cover 95 percent of the cost of an upgrade and expansion to the Richfield Regional Airport in a project that will take until 2014, and cost a total of approximately \$24 million to complete.

—The Richfield Reaper

**Rocky Mountain Power** has proposed a project to establish a new, double circuit high voltage transmission line from the Currant Creek Power Plant and two future substations in Utah. On the original timeline for the project, construction is set to begin in 2010 and run through 2012. The \$4 billion project involves two 500-kilowatt lines.

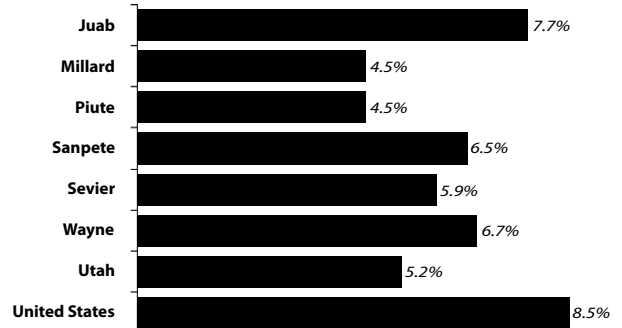
—The Nephi Times

### Percent Change in Nonfarm Jobs December 2007 to December 2008



Source: Utah Dept. of Workforce Services; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

### Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates March 2009



Source: Utah Dept. of Workforce Services; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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